

Biography for Luz Maria Frias

Luz Maria Frias holds Master's Degree and Juris Doctor Degrees from the University of Iowa. Ms. Frias worked in the Minnesota House of Representatives prior to her serving as the Chief Legal Officer of Centro Legal, a non-profit law office for the Latino community, for eight years. Ms. Frias served as a Family Court Magistrate in the Second and Fourth Judicial Districts in Minnesota for six years and also served as a Hearing Examiner for the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. Ms. Frias served as Mayor Chris Coleman's External Affairs Director for 3 years before she was appointed by Mayor Coleman to serve as the first Director of the newly created Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Department in 2009. She is an experienced mediator and frequent lecturer on the issues of diversity within the courts; diversity issues in the mediation process; cross-cultural negotiation issues, immigration public policy reform, and the use of interpreters within the legal system. She brings over ten years of experience in program development, fundraising, and leadership training.

Ms. Frias is actively involved in the community in the following capacities: She served as the 2008-2009 President of Minnesota Women Lawyers Association, Trustee for the Minnesota Historical Society, Corporate Trustee for Health Partners, and Trustee for the Council on Crime and Justice. She is a past member of the Minnesota Supreme Court's Blue Ribbon Commission on Legal Services, a past member of the Minnesota Supreme Court's Interpreter Committee, Past President and a charter member of the Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association and a former Trustee of The Saint Paul Foundation and The Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation.

A noted civil rights advocate for over twenty years, Ms. Frias' commitment and record of service have been recognized by: Bernard P. Becker Award through the Minnesota State Bar Association; Courage in Leadership Award by the Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association; Excellence in Service Award from Centro Legal, Inc.; Latina Leadership Award from Latinas Active in Social Change and Social Issues; Minnesota Hispanic Leadership Award conferred by Governor Arne H. Carlson; Minnesota Latino Achievement Award by Vice Versa Magazine; The Comadre Award from Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES); The Amigo Award from El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad of The Saint Paul Foundation; The Ohtli Award conferred by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the highest distinguished award given by the Country of Mexico to individuals living in a foreign country that have demonstrated a commitment to serve communities and families of Mexican origin; and recipient of Minnesota Lawyer's 2008 Attorney of the Year award.